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A radio talk by Dr. W. W. Skinner, Bureau of Chemistry and Soils, delivered through WRC and 44 other associate NBC stations, U.S. Department of Agriculture period of the National Farm and Home Hour, November 3, 1931.

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Today several hundred chemists from State Universities, Agricultural Experiment Stations and the Federal Departments are meeting in Washington to discuss methods of analysis for soils, dairy products, foods, drugs, feeds, fertilizers, insecticides, fungicides, paints, and other materials of interest to the farmer. The results of analysis by these methods are today the standards for trade in these commodities.

Forty-seven years ago the need for a combined effort to secure uniformity and accuracy in analytical results was serious. Chemists engaged in agricultural research were working independently, without system, and without agreement as to methods and procedure. Commercial fertilizers first engaged the attention of these chemists because of the increasing commercial demand for fertilizers to renew the diminished fertility of the soil. But the analyses made for the buyers seldom agreed with those made for the sellers which naturally led to much controversy. You can imagine that conditions were chaotic. Realizing the necessity for chemical methods which would yield the same results no matter who did the analysis, the Commissioners of Agriculture from twenty states met with chemists interested in fertilizer control in the library of the Department of Agriculture at Washington in July, 1880. The Hon. J. T. Henderson, Commissioner of Agriculture of Georgia, issued the call for the meeting. Its purpose was to consider the formation of an association to secure uniformity for determining by chemical analysis the percentage of valuable ingredients in commercial fertilizers. The movement thus started culminated in the organization of the Association of Official Agricultural Chemists in September, 1884. Since that first meeting the scope of the Association has necessarily widened until now it gives attention to methods of analysis for all products connected with the agricultural industry, to the great benefit of agricultural science.

In the nearly half century of its existence the Association has succeeded in bringing about such uniform methods and accurate results of analysis as to command the confidence of chemists, both official and commercial, the world over. The association's work not only has affected regulatory control of commodities but has provided the tools for the necessary research to lower costs of producing these commodities and to bring them into wider use. Because of the interrelation of industry and science, the commercial industries affected by the work of the Association support its efforts. It may be said, I believe, that the higher ethical standards now prevailing in those industries affected by commerce are due in part to the work of this Association.

Many of the control laws affecting the welfare and health of the people of the United States have received their first impetus in this Association. The action of the Association in 1897 in appointing a committee to consider standards of purity for foods and drinks had a definite influence in the enactment of the Federal food and drugs act and the Federal meat inspection act in 1906. The standard analytical methods, revised and issued

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every five years, have made the work of the regulatory official more reliable and more effective. The courts recognize analyses made by these standard methods and accept them as reliable expressions of the composition of substances.